

CHRONOLOGICAL NOTES ON BYZANTINE DOCUMENTS, III¹

32. The Indiction in the Herakleopolite Nome

In *CSBE* we took the documentation from the Herakleopolite Nome together with that from the Arsinoite in compiling our tables (p. 20) concerning the nature of the indiction-year, in particular the tables of occurrences of ἀρχῆ and τέλει. In the ensuing discussion, however, we raised the possibility that this grouping might not be correct (p. 29). Our more recent work has persuaded us that in fact this grouping is unjustified. Three groups of Herakleopolite documentation are interesting in this regard: (a) examples of ἀρχῆ in Thoth; (b) examples of τέλει in Epeiph and Mesore; and (c) dates to the “old” indiction after 1 May without indication of this fact by means of τέλει.

(a) We noted in *CSBE* that there were two examples of ἀρχῆ in Thoth from the Herakleopolite, viz. *P.Erl.* 67 (Thoth 19) and *SB* VI 9153 (Thoth 17/27; cf. *RFBE* 63) from A.D. 591 and 596 respectively. We believe that we can now establish a third example in *P.Stras.* 318. This lease of land is published with the following dating formula at the beginning:

[Μετὰ τὴν] ὑπατείαν τοῦ [δ]εσπ[ό]τ[ου]
[τῶν] Μαυρικίου Τ[ιβέ]ριου
[τὸ] κβ ἀρχῆ τῆς ἐϋτυχ[ο]ῦς
[.].. ἄτης ἰνδ(ικτίωνος) ἐν Ἡρ[ακλ(έους)] πόλ(ει).

¹ For the previous installments of this series see *BASP* 15 (1978) 233–46 and 16 (1979) 221–37. We use the following abbreviations in addition to the usual ones: *CSBE* = *Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt* (Stud.Amst. 8, Zutphen 1978); *RFBE* = *Regnal Formulas in Byzantine Egypt* (*BASP* Suppl. 2, Missoula 1979); *CNBD* = “Chronological Notes on Byzantine Documents” (the present series). The present installment deals with questions of regionalism in dating practices.

The editor dates it to 590–596. There are only two other examples of this postconsular formula, namely the two documents mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph. Both of these texts are dated in Thoth, as we have noted, and both also contain ἀρχῇ.

The certain or nearly certain restorations of lines 1, 5, 6, 7, and 10–14 give a very strong indication of the length of the lacuna at the left side; the range is 6–9 letters (in line 5 the degree of abbreviation is uncertain), with 6–7 being fairly secure in the upper part of the papyrus. The possible restorations of lines 3–4 are thus very severely limited. In line 4, where the first two letters after the lacuna are not read, some 8–10 letters must precede ατης. Indictions 9, 10, 11, and 12 may be excluded as too short, while 14 is certainly too long. Given the length of the lacuna, 13 is to be preferred to 15, which at 11 letters before ατης seems excessive. We restore therefore [τρισκαιδ]εκάτης.

In line 3, we need after ἔτους (not τὸ, cf. the other two examples) a two-digit number giving the postconsular reckoning of Mauricius, and perhaps a stroke after this. Three letters can follow in the lacuna. Of the months which can be found with ἀρχῇ, only Thoth will fit the space. Thoth 22 is thus 19.ix.594. The possible restorations of the postconsular number in line 3 are therefore 11 and 12, depending on whether the old or new style reckoning was used. In line 1, we expect (and have space for) a cross, while in line 2, we should restore Φλ(αουίου) before Μαυρικίου.

In sum, we restore *P.Stras.* 318 as follows:

[† Μετὰ τὴν] ὑπατείαν τοῦ [δ]εσπ[ό]τ[ου]
[ἡμῶν Φλ(αουίου) Μα]υρικίου Τ[ιβ]ε[ρ]ρίου
[ἔτους ια, Θῶθ] κβ ἀρχῇ τῆς εὐτυχ[ο]ῦς
[τρισκαιδ]εκάτης ἰνδ(ικτίονος) ἐν Ἡρ[ακλ(έους)] πόλ(ει).

It is probable that originally an invocation preceded this date. (We will deal with this question elsewhere.)

This third example seriously reduces the chances that we are dealing with a coincidence, for these three are the total of our instances of ἀρχῇ in the Herakleopolite. The pattern is thus very different from that in the Arsinoite, where examples fall mostly in Epeiph and Mesore.²

(b) The sole example of τέλει cited from this nome was *SB* VIII 9876, dated to Epeiph 22 (16.vii) A.D. 534. This date, again, does not fit the pattern of the Arsinoite Nome, where examples fall in Pachon and Pauni (i.e. in the last two months of the indiction year reckoned by the *delegatio*, cf. *CSBE* 27). But we set aside from the discussion—wrongly, we now

2 See the chart in *CSBE* 55–60 and the tabulation on p. 20.

believe—*SPP* III 86 (cf. *CSBE* 62 n. 64), a text in which we have a reference to τέλει in Mesore. On reconsideration, we do not see how the reference can be anything but a chronological one. This instance too coincides with the evidence cited above.

(c) We cited two documents from the Herakleopolite in which dates between Pachon 1 and Epeiph 1 (or 1 May and 1 July) occur which must be attributed to the indiction which began in the preceding julian year, *BGU* I 314 (Pachon 28) and *SB* VI 9152 (Pauni 23). If these followed the Arsinoite pattern, they would need to have τέλει; but it is lacking. Another probable indication of a Herakleopolite indiction running to Thoth 1 occurs in *P.Vindob.Sijp.* 7, a surety contract for a vineyard worker: the time period concerned is stated to run πρώτης ἰνδ(ι) `κ' (τίωνος) ἕως Θῶθ νεομην[ί]ας ῥύσεως δευτέρας ἰνδικτίονος. (For the reading see *ZPE* 29 [1978] 275.) The first indiction ended in 463, and the vintage of the second also took place in that year, at the start of the indiction. It seems indicated that the first indiction in this case ran until the first of Thoth. It seems likely to us, by the way, that the document actually dates to 463. The editor restored line 1 as [Ὑπατ(είας) τοῦ δ(ε)σπότ(ου) ἡμῶν] Φλ. Λέοντος κτλ., based on a lacuna of about 16 letters (cf. line 2). One might also restore [Μετὰ τὴν ὑπατείαν], which comes to 15 letters. The omission of τοῦ δ(ε)σπότου ἡμῶν before an emperor's name is by no means unparalleled (cf. *CSBE* 112 a.363 for *P.Oxy.* VIII 1116; *CSBE* 113 a.364 and 115 a.390 for *P.Ant.* II 102). Two reasons specifically support this suggestion: (a) the abbreviation in this fashion of ὑπατείας and δεσπότου is unparalleled in any consular date heading a document before the time of Justinian (*SB* VI 9311 has a restoration with such abbreviations, but we are not at all persuaded that they are needed or correct there, either [cf. *CNBD* VII 71]), and they ought to be avoided if possible; (b) a surety-contract concerning the activities of a vine-grower in the harvest of 463 is more likely to have been made shortly before the actual pressing, not almost a year earlier.

A further item of evidence is provided by *P.Vindob.Inv.* G 25927, which will be published in *CPR* VIII. It is a lease dated by the postconsulate of Justinus II, year 10, Mesore 5 of the eighth indiction. Justinus' tenth postconsular year may be 575 or 576 (depending on the reckoning method used), while indiction 8 is 574/5. It will be apparent that Mesore 5 (29.vii) with these criteria can only be 29.vii.575, indicating that the indiction was still going on at that date which had begun in the previous julian year.

These four texts are the totality of the pertinent evidence of this type known to us. If they, and those cited above under *a* and *b*, were exceptions in a mass of evidence conforming to the Arsinoite pattern, they might be explained away. But they are in fact the totality of the relevant evidence for

the Herakleopolite Nome. We are therefore led to believe that the alternative suggestion which we advanced in *CSBE* is correct, namely that Herakleopolis observed an indiction year running from Thoth through Mesore. This characteristic immediately reminds us of the Oxyrhynchite practice (see *CSBE* 26), and it suggests that the Herakleopolite practices were linked to those of Oxyrhynchos. In this connection it is worth quoting the remarks of R. Rémondon on the relations of these two towns in the Byzantine period:³

La médiocrité de la documentation héracléopolitaine, sensible déjà avant le 5e siècle, est probablement liée au déclin de la cité, victime de sa voisine du sud. A la fin du 5e siècle et pendant une grande partie du 6e, Héracléopolis et la moitié méridionale au moins de son territoire paraissent être dans la dépendance politique et sous l'emprise économique d'Oxyrhynchos.

Interestingly enough, *SB* VI 9152 is one of the texts cited by Rémondon for this domination.

Despite this Oxyrhynchite domination, however, one should not leap to the conclusion that the Herakleopolite scribal habits were the same. This is not the case. Oxyrhynchite scribes never used *τέλει*; Herakleopolite ones did. Oxyrhynchite scribes used *ἀρχῆ* principally in the months Epeiph and Mesore, to distinguish the period between the start of the indiction (*delegatio*-reckoning) and the start of the civil year, used in Oxyrhynchos for indictional and era-year reckoning (cf. *CSBE* 26); Herakleopolite scribes used *ἀρχῆ* in Thoth, evidently simply to mean the start of the indiction year. In short, the meanings which Herakleopolite scribes attach to *ἀρχῆ* and *τέλει* are those in use in the neighboring Arsinoite; but the year to which they attach them is that found in Oxyrhynchos. Curious though the conclusion may seem, it appears necessary on our present evidence: another instance of the persistent localism of scribal habits and reckoning in Byzantine Egypt.

It should also be said that with the separation of the Herakleopolite into a separate category, much of the material which had to be viewed as breaking the rules for the Arsinoite is no longer a difficulty: thus two of the six late *ἀρχῆ*, one of four late *τέλει*, and two of three late dates without *τέλει* can be removed from the list of pattern-breakers. Additionally, some of the other recalcitrant Arsinoite evidence is not very firm. Of nine uses of *ἀρχῆ* after Thoth I now know, three are Herakleopolite and two are Oxyrhynchite (*P.Oxy.* XIX 2244.68 and *P.Oxy.* VIII 1130). About the others, one may observe that *SPP* VIII 1320 and *SB* I 5279 may well refer to the same text, to judge from Wessely's description, and that in

3 *Atti XI Congresso* 138, 142.

neither case is there any internal evidence allowing assignment to the Arsinoite Nome. It may be true that they were found there, but so were other papyri which were *written* elsewhere.⁴ *SB* I 4484, the sole Arsinoite example of ἀρχῆ in Phaophi, was published on several occasions by Wessely; his text in *DenkschrWien* 37 (1889) 167, App. 708, does not have ἀρχῆ; thus the solidity of this witness does not seem beyond doubt. There remains only *BGU* I 311, dated to Thoth 2. One could suppose that this scribe used 1 September rather than Thoth 1, or one might consider that the party issuing the document comes from Theogenis, near the border between the Arsinoite and Herakleopolite Nomes; at all events, the exception would not be very impressive evidence.

As to τέλει texts, of the four potentially problematic Arsinoite examples, two (*SB* I 4810 and *P. Ross. Georg.* III 57) are so far from any normal pattern (they fall in Choiak and Mecheir) as to be impossible to fit into any system. *SPP* XX 112 (reference to Thoth) seems to contain some error in any event (see *CSBE* 62 n.63); and we have suggested an alternative reading of *P. Ross. Georg.* III 39 which would eliminate the problem there.

Finally, the only Arsinoite date after 1 May with no indication of τέλει, *P. Haun. Inv.* 318, is the work of a scribe not competent at dating clauses in any event.⁵

To conclude, the establishment of a peculiar scribal pattern for the Herakleopolite Nome allows us to reduce significantly the problematic exceptions to the pattern established for the Arsinoite, while many of the remaining problem-texts are themselves able to be eliminated or discounted.

33. The Indiction in the Memphite Nome

We know of only one document which contributes to the question of how scribes reckoned the indiction in the Memphite. *BGU* I 255 is a surety contract dated 15.v.599. The editor gives the Fayum as the provenance, and no doubt the papyrus may have been found there, but the papyrus states clearly that it was written ἐν Μέμφ(ι). It is dated by regnal year 17 of Mauricius (13.viii.598–12.viii.599), by his consular year 16 (598 and 599 are possible), and by indiction 3 (599/600). Only the date given above, 15.v.599, will satisfy these criteria on a Pachon 20. From this

4 Aside from the Memphite piece discussed as no. 33 below, the following papyri published by Wessely as from the Fayum seem dubiously ascribed to the Arsinoite: *SB* I 4669 (really Hermopolite, cf. *RFBE* 70); *SB* I 4676; *SB* I 4683 (cf. *CSBE* 5 n.21, observation [7]); *SB* I 4715 (cf. *SB* I 4669); *SB* I 4796 (cf. *RFBE* 50). In addition, many “Fayum papyri” published by Wessely in *CPR* I actually come from Herakleopolis.

5 See *ZPE* 28 (1978) 226 for a correction of the date in this text.

reckoning, it can be seen that Pachon 20 in indiction 3 fell in the first julian year of that indiction, and that the indiction therefore must have started before Pachon 20 in that place. Insofar as one may be permitted to generalize on the basis of this unique text, we consider it demonstrated that the Pachon indiction was in use in Memphis.

34. Λήγω, λήξις and the Start of the Indiction

A few texts exhibit uses of the verb λήγω or its noun λήξις which seem puzzling. As our remarks in *CSBE* 60 n.47 are inadequate on this point, we supplement and correct them now. First we consider *P.Cair.Masp.* III 67303, an Antinoopolite document to be dated to 27.iv.553. The dating clause concludes, Παχὼν δευτέρᾳ ληγούσης πρώτης ἰνδικτίονος. The contract is for rental of a wagon for the harvest of the “present” second indiction. Given the normal usage in Upper Egypt at this time (cf. *CSBE* 25–26), an indiction beginning on 1 May must be in question.⁶ A similar usage of the noun may be observed in *P.Lond.* III 1326b descr., of which the plate (Atlas III, pl. 91) allows us to read the following dating formula:

- 1 † Β[ασι]λεί[α]ς τοῦ θειοτάτ[ου] ἡμῶν δεσπό(του) Φλ(αουίου)
Μαυρικίου
- 2 νέου Τιβερίου τοῦ αἰωνί[ου] Αὐγούστου αὐτοκρ(άτορος) ἔτους
πρώτου
- 3 Παχὼν νεομηνία λ[ή]ξεως πρώτης ἰνδ(ικτίονος).

This text, from the Hermopolite Nome, is thus dated to Mauricius’ year 1 (13.viii.582–12.viii.583) and to indiction 1, 582/3. Pachon 1 can only be 26.iv.583, and λήξις must mean the end of the May indictional year, as its verb did in *P.Cair.Masp.* III 67303.

A conclusion might seem in order, that λήγω and λήξις are used as non-technical terms for the end of the May indiction in Upper Egyptian documents (in contrast to the technical use of ἀρχῇ and τέλει in the Arsinoite Nome; it will be recalled that τέλει is never used in this region). But *P.Lond.* V 1794 comes to nullify this conclusion. It is a partnership contract from Hermopolis, dated to the postconsulate of Fl. Longinus. It reckons (10–12) ἀ[πὸ τῆς] προγεγραμμένης σήμερον ἡμέρας ἥτις ἐστὶν Παῦνι ἑβδομηκαιεκάς λήξεως τῆς παρούσης ἑνδεκάτης ἰνδ(ικτίονος).⁷

6 Our remarks on *CSBE* 60 n.47 are thus correct but need this further observation.

7 The verification of our suggested reading λήξεως in place of the editor’s δίξεως is owed to T. S. Pattie, who studied the original at our request. He writes, “I have looked at *P.Lond.* V 1794 (Pap. 1673) line 11 under ultra-violet and infra-red light and am convinced that λήξεως is correct.” Our remarks in *CSBE* 55 n.1 on this papyrus are naturally nullified by this new reading.

The end of indiction 11 fell in 488, and the date is therefore 21.vi.488 (to be corrected in *CSBE*, where editor's date accepted and the text listed under 487).

A similar usage is found in an inscription from Ombos ascribed to the sixth or seventh century, *SB* IV 7475 (*Lefebvre* 562). The inscription (which concerns the restoration of a hostel) mentions the following date: ιδ ινδ(ικτίονος) ληγ(ούσης) Παῦνι ιθ (line 32).⁸ This text and *P.Lond.* 1794, both coming from Pauni, seem scarcely ascribable to any indiction year except the reckoning of the *delegatio* from Epeiph 1 or 1 July. Such reckoning is not normally found in Upper Egypt.⁹ At all events, these four documents suggest that λήγω and λήξις do not have a specific and technical meaning to be compared with the τέλει/ἀρχῇ system in use in the Arsinoite, but are used to refer to the end of an indiction year, however reckoned.

35. Honorific Epithets of Fl. Basilius

In the listing of dates by the consulate and postconsular years of Fl. Basilius between 541 and 566 (*CSBE* 124–25), we found three honorific epithets attached to his name, λαμπρότατος, ἐνδοξότατος and πανεύφημος. Further tabulation of the material has shown that the use of these epithets is regionally defined, and we think it is worthwhile to set out the evidence and our summary conclusions.

In the Arsinoite, Herakleopolite and Oxyrhynchite Nomes, all preserved epithets are λαμπρότατος (as are the two documents from Constantinople). These are as follows:

Arsinoite: *SPP* XX 142; *P.Lond.* I 113 (5b); *BGU* III 736; *P.Vindob.Sal.* 10; *BGU* II 364; *SB* VI 9283; *BGU* I 305.

Herakleopolite: *SB* I 4676 (restored).

Oxyrhynchite: *P.Oxy.* XVI 1995; *PSI* VII 790; *SB* XII 11162; *P.Oxy.* XVI 1985; *P.Princ.* III 154; *P.Bad.* VI 172; *SB* VI 9239; *P.Oxy.* I 133; *P.Oxy.* I 140; *PSI* I 77; *P.Oxy.* XIX 2238, XXXVI 2780, XVI 1965, XVI 1895, XVI 1970, XVI 1980, I 125, XVI 1972; *P.Wisc.* I 8; *P.Got.* 9; *PSI* XIV 1427. Of these only *P.Oxy.* XVI 1895 is restored.

Constantinople: see *RFBE* 46.

It seems a fair conclusion that in Arcadia λαμπρότατος was used exclusively. One problematic case is discussed at the end of this note.

In Thebais, one finds no examples of λαμπρότατος; rather, ἐνδοξότατος is standard (with 54 examples), while πανεύφημος is found

⁸ The indiction number is erroneously given as ια in *CSBE* 60 n.47.

⁹ See *CSBE* 25–26. Even aberrations are rather rare, cf. *CSBE* 28–29, 63–64.

occasionally (a total of 7 examples). The evidence by nomes is the following:

Hermopolite, *ἐνδοξότατος*: *P. Stras.* 597 (rest.); *P. Stras.* 487; *P. Lond.* III 1002, V 1872; *P. Stras.* 484, 338 (rest.), 247, 4; *P. Herm.* 65 (rest.); *SB VI* 9284; *P. Stras.* 398; *SB VI* 9292; *P. Lond.* III 1330b, 874; V 1765; III 1006; V 1766, 1767; *P. Stras.* 248; *BGU XII* 2200; *P. Lond.* III 1003; *BGU XII* 2202; *SB VI* 9085, inv. 16048. *πανεύφημος*: *P. Stras.* 482; *P. Lond.* III 1319; *P. Stras.* 485, 474.

Antinoopolite, *ἐνδοξότατος*: *P. Cair. Masp.* III 67302; *P. Ant.* I 42 (cf. *CNBD* II 13); *P. Stras.* 46–49 (mostly restored; cf. *BASP* 15[1978] 238–40).

Antaiopolite, *ἐνδοξότατος*: *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67087, II 67127; *P. Ross. Georg.* III 37; *P. Cair. Masp.* II 67128, I 67095, II 67129; *PSI IV* 283 (rest.); *P. Flor.* III 285, 286; *P. Cair. Masp.* III 67332; *SB III* 7201 (cf. *CNBD* IV 51); *P. Lond.* V 1661; *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67093, 67092, 67094 (rest.); III 67303; *P. Lond.* V 1692a, 1692b; *P. Cair. Masp.* II 67130; *P. Lond.* III 1007c; *P. Michael.* 46; *P. Lond.* V 1686; *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67109, 67110. *πανεύφημος*: *P. Cair. Masp.* III 67108, 67118.

Antaiopolite, perhaps written in the Panopolite, *ἐνδοξότατος*: *P. Cair. Masp.* II 67170, 67171.

Hermonthite, *ἐνδοξότατος*: *P. Lond.* V 1719, 1720.

In sum, one may normally in Thebais expect that *ἐνδοξότατος* will be the epithet used, but in the Hermopolite and Antaiopolite at least one also finds occasionally *πανεύφημος*, and it may be that in the other nomes only the paucity of evidence is responsible for the absence of such attestations.

One anomalous case needs discussion, *P. Lond.* V 1797. According to the editor, this text is dated to the postconsulate of Fl. Basilius (no year specified), Epeiph 18, 10th indiction, thus 12 July 546; he expresses some doubt. The text comes from Oxyrhynchos, but it shows the epithet *ἐνδοξότατος*. First, it may be remarked that as Oxyrhynchos used an indiction year beginning in Thoth, one would normally expect that this document fell to the second of the julian years involved, i.e. 547 (so listed in *CSBE* 124). But the epithet is disturbing, a unique blemish on the uniform pattern described above. The absence of a year of Fl. Basilius leaves open the possibility that a different consulate is intended. The editor prints the name as *Ἰλίου*, and on a xerox copy kindly provided by T. S. Pattie we can see that the editor's note to line 1 is very accurate; what survives allows any letter with a lower right-hand diagonal. The only real possibility seems to be that suggested by Bell, the reading of *Ἀνθε]μίου*, which would yield the postconsulate of Anthemius in 515, hence 516. Bell rejected this date on the grounds that "if both consuls were named *τῶν ἐνδοξοτατῶν* should have been written, and moreover there seems no room for both names. Hence

the date after the consulship of Basilius may be regarded as fairly probable; but of course it is possible that Anthemius was named alone." The available evidence for the consulate of 515 (cited in *CSBE* 122) shows that in both documents known (*SPP* XX 126 and *P.Cair.Masp.* III 67306) Anthemius does in fact appear alone. The only objection raised by Bell to a date in 516 is thus eliminated.

A possibly more serious one remains, that a date in 516 means that Epeiph stands in the first julian year of the indiction of 516/7, contrary to normal Oxyrhynchite practice (but cf. *CSBE* 26 for the use of indictional years starting on Epeiph 1). The extremely bad condition of the document makes it impossible to tell what its contents were (a contract of some sort), but the parties are a *singularis* and a *scholasticus*, men of some station in life. It is conceivable that the *singularis*, who is on the staff of the *praeses* of Arcadia, is not a resident of Oxyrhynchos and is not following its practices, but the conflict is nonetheless disturbing. As we find it less improbable than the assignment of a document from Oxyrhynchos (or anywhere in Arcadia) with ἐνδοξότατος to the period of Fl. Basilius, we prefer a date in 516.

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